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ABSTRACT

Texas has moved from an education system that prescribes procedures to one that emphasizes student achievement. The plan described here provides a framework that educators and policymakers can use to coordinate federal, state, regional, and local education plans and initiatives in Texas. The plan includes the following goals: Students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the reading and writing of the English language, in the understanding of mathematics, in the understanding of science, and in the understanding of social studies. Also, each public school student shall master the basic skills necessary for managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner, and for gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or for continuing the student's education at the postsecondary level. Nine objectives are described: involving parents and family in student learning; having students learn and achieve at their highest levels; reducing the dropout rate; providing relevant curricula; providing quality school personnel; having students demonstrate exemplary performance in academic achievement; making schools safe; providing for educational research and innovation; and providing educational technology. A short glossary concludes the document. (RT)

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ED 461 941

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION 2001-2006

Updated November 2000

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TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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JIM NELSON
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

December 2000

TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND CITIZENS OF TEXAS:

The State Board of Education adopted the *Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001-2006,* in November 2000. The board developed the updated plan over a six-month period based on careful evaluation of the previous long-range plan and consideration of statutory changes since 1996.

Section 7.102(c)(1) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) directs the State Board of Education to develop and update a long-range plan for public education. TEC §11.251 directs campus and district decision making committees to support the state's goals and objectives in their planning processes. To enhance coordination of state and local educational planning, the board's long-range plan is fully aligned with the mission, goals, and objectives in TEC §4.001, §4.002, and §29.181.

This long-range plan envisions a public education system based on the following fundamental principles: all students can learn; all educators can develop the knowledge and expertise to implement programs that ensure all students can learn; districts and campuses can be held accountable for student achievement; state policies and plans can guide local decision making; and the roles of parents and communities are fundamental in student learning and campus and district performance.

The plan states that academic excellence, determined by the levels of individual and institutional performance in Texas public schools, and equity, measured by each student's achievement of rigorous learning standards, are the starting points and the fundamental indicators of the quality of public education planning in Texas. The document outlines challenging initiatives and results for the next five years that support system-wide improvement encompassing prekindergarten through high school education, post-secondary education and the world of work.

On behalf of the State Board of Education, I commend to you the *Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001-2006.*

Respectfully submitted,

Chase Untermeyer, Chairman
State Board of Education

Preparing Children, Promoting Excellence

State Board of Education

(State Board for Career and Technology Education)

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LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION 2001-2006

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MISSION OF
TEXAS PUBLIC EDUCATION

The mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation. That mission is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of this state and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of citizens. It is further grounded on the conviction that a successful public education system is directly related to a strong, dedicated, and supportive family and that parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

THE CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATION

Education has always been important. It is part of the American dream and always has been critical to social and economic progress. The first section of Article VII of the Texas Constitution states:

> "A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools."

This statement is both a promise to Texas citizens and a challenge. It frames the central issue facing educators, parents, families, policymakers, and community members: How to plan, manage, and integrate state and local improvements in education in ways that ensure high levels of excellence and equity for all students.

We live in an age of transformation. It is illustrated by changing demographic and social patterns, made manifest by changing work force needs, and based upon changing ideas of education and what it means to be educated. Full participation in our society and economy now requires all of our citizens to achieve their full potential through knowledge acquisition. It means that high school diplomas and post-secondary degrees must be seen as steps, rather than end points, in a lifetime of continuous learning.

One need only look as far as the classroom to see evidence of our changing society. First, the Texas student population is rapidly growing, with a projection of 4.25 million by 2005. Second, it is becoming more diverse. In the 1990-91 school year, racial and ethnic minority children became the majority student population in Texas. The 1999-2000 student population consisted of 14.4% African American, 39.5% Hispanic, 43.2% White, and 2.9% Asian or Native American. Hispanic students accounted for 89.3% of the most recent annual enrollment growth.

One in four Texas children under the age of 6 lives in poverty (1998 Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census). Approximately 64% of African American and 75% of Hispanic children in public schools are considered economically disadvantaged. Prekindergarten programs in Texas, established by law to serve three- and four-year-olds from low-income families or who are limited-English proficient will see their enrollment increase by 2% each year. Enrollment in the state's bilingual education programs is projected to increase by 22% over the next five years.

Demographic trends now in the classroom will be reflected in the workplace. Between 2000 and 2010, it is projected that the number of persons in the state's labor force will have increased by approximately 45% for Hispanics and 17% for African Americans, compared to 7% for Whites. The jobs filled by these new workers will be knowledge-based, requiring technical skills and a solid foundation of theoretical and applied knowledge. Labor market forecasts project that jobs related to manufacturing and agribusiness will continue to shrink as a percentage of the Texas workforce, with jobs in both industries combined representing less than one-eighth of total state employment by 2008. In contrast, employment opportunities in knowledge-based industries such as business services, health services, and educational services will continue to grow at much higher rates than other employment areas, accounting for nearly one-half of all new jobs in Texas from 1998 to 2008. Our schools, our state, and our communities must anticipate work in a new economy, in which knowledge-based occupations require high levels of formal education and continuous learning.

Texas is prepared to meet the challenges of the new century. Almost two decades of education reform have resulted in improved student achievement, institutional performance, and organizational management in education. Through this reform, state and local educators and policymakers have moved from an education system emphasizing prescribed procedures to one that emphasizes high standards of achievement for all students. These improvements have occurred with state-level support for local educators addressing their campus and district needs through the knowledge and skills they have acquired through training, ongoing development, and practice.

Highlights of reform include:

- articulation of essential knowledge and skills of instruction in the subjects of a well-balanced curriculum;
- development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to ensure that all students in Texas are able to read on grade level or higher by the end of third grade and continue to read on grade level or higher throughout their schooling;
- development and implementation of a rigorous state assessment system including English and Spanish versions of the criterion-referenced Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the State Developed Alternative Assessment of students in special education programs, and the Reading Proficiency Tests in English for limited English proficient students;
- development and implementation of more rigorous requirements for high school graduation;
- implementation of a campus and school district accountability system which gives flexibility in program design and creates high expectations for student achievement;
- in accordance with local school board policies, the implementation of site-based decision-making committees in every district and campus involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, school organization, and the development of annual improvement plans geared to the indicators within the state's integrated accountability system;
- the positive use of waivers from state and federal mandates to encourage campus- and district-level innovation;
- increasing flexibility and choice through the creation of home-rule school district charters, campus or campus program charters, and open enrollment charter schools;
- establishment of disciplinary and juvenile justice alternative education programs and student disciplinary procedures;
- maintenance of a highly equitable school finance system that permits revenue disparities per weighted student of no more than $400 per weighted student for maintenance purposes, and that provides at least 90% of students with equalized access to state support for debt service.
- the *Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010*, which establishes frameworks and increased funding for statewide educational telecommunications networks, electronic instructional materials, research and development, and training in instructional technologies;

- promotion of grass roots reform for improved student performance through initiatives such as the mentor school networks that are built on models of high performing schools helping schools of like socioeconomic status; and
- development of a results-based educator accountability system focused on the competencies teachers and administrators need to ensure that each student achieves state standards of performance.

Texas public schools and communities have made steady progress translating the reforms into student performance gains. As educators, policymakers, parents and family members, and community members, however, we continue to be challenged to increase the levels of excellence by improving overall student performance, and by reducing the disparities in academic performance between different student groups.

The 1999-00 results from the TAAS indicate significant increases in student achievement over 1994-95 – across grade levels, subject areas, and student populations. The results also suggest the state is closing the achievement gap between the state's diverse student groups, with African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students making performance gains on virtually all sections of the TAAS. In addition, the percentage of seniors who passed the exit-level test prior to their normal graduation date increased to 98.1% in 1999-00. However, almost 88% of the 4,150 students not passing the exit test were minorities. The percentage of Texas students who take college entrance examinations such as SAT and ACT has continued to increase over the past ten years, and their performance has also improved. The annual dropout rate has continued to decline over the past eleven years, from nearly 7% in 1987-88 to 1.6% in 1998-99. The attrition rate, which measures the difference in total enrollment between grades 9 and 12, has remained steady during the last three years, ranging from 35% to 37%. However, the longitudinal dropout rate for grades 7-12 for 1999 averaged 9.0% for all students, including White students at 5.1%, Hispanics at 14.3%, and African Americans at 11.7%. This represents a total of 21,779 students over the six-year period 1993-94 through 1998-99.

Preliminary 1999-00 data indicate nearly 80% of the students at any given grade level passed all TAAS tests taken. While this evidence is encouraging, economically disadvantaged students were more than 10 percentage points below the passing rates for all students in grades 3-8 and 10.

Education in an age of transformation demands that we focus our resources and skills on the critical task of creating learning environments that challenge all students to excel. The measures of excellence and equity encompass the ability of the state to articulate a vision of progress in education, the knowledge and expertise that educators bring with them into the classroom, and the levels of participation that parents, family members, and community members generate through active involvement in education.

High levels of excellence in education are of paramount importance to our success and prosperity as individual citizens, as members of our society, and participants in our economy. The level of educational quality needed for our state and communities to succeed in a knowledge-based age grows out of a commitment to high achievement, on each campus and for every student. State and local educators and policymakers will reach it not through mandates, but through coordinated state, regional, and local planning that is directed toward academic and instructional improvement and based on the goals and objectives stated in this *Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001-2006*.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, 2001-2006

Texas has moved from an education system that prescribes procedures to one that emphasizes student achievement. In Texas public education, academic excellence is the standard by which rules, policies, programs, and instructional practices are judged. More than two decades of reform have shifted the focus of the Texas public school system from reliance on mandates to reliance on knowledge, accountability, and planning. The State Board of Education envisions a system of public education that is based on these fundamental principles: all students can learn; all educators can develop the knowledge and expertise to implement programs that ensure all students can learn; districts and campuses can be held accountable for student achievement; state policies and plans can guide local decision making; and the roles of parents and communities are fundamental in student learning and campus and district performance.

Planning is a key element of Texas public education. The State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency, regional education service centers, school districts, and campuses all develop plans that assess educational needs and focus resources on attaining high standards of student achievement. Academic excellence, determined by the levels of individual and institutional performance in Texas public schools, and equity, measured by each student's achievement of rigorous learning standards, are the starting points and the fundamental indicators of the quality of public education planning in Texas.

The State Board of Education establishes long-range plans aimed at achieving goals and objectives for excellence and equity in Texas public education. The purpose of the *Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001-2006* is to provide a framework that educators and policymakers can use to coordinate federal, state, regional, and local education plans and initiatives in Texas. This plan recognizes and seeks to build upon the documented progress Texas educators have made over the last two decades in improving student achievement. Educators' ability to coordinate policies, resources, and instructional efforts around education goals and objectives will profoundly impact their continued success over the next five years. The State Board of Education believes coherent planning at all levels focused on clearly stated goals and objectives for public education is essential to the achievement of high standards of educational quality and student performance.

This *Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001-2006* addresses the mission, goals, and objectives in the Texas Education Code. The strong ties between this plan and the board's previous long-range plans emphasize the intensity of the board's focus on continuous educational improvement. This long-range plan provides the impetus for better coordination and communication of state, regional, and local roles and responsibilities for improving student achievement. The goals, objectives, and accompanying initiatives in this plan support system wide improvement that encompasses prekindergarten through high school education, post-secondary education, and the world of work.

G O A L S

Public Education Academic Goals

To serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education:

Goal 1: the students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the reading and writing of the English language.

Goal 2: the students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of mathematics.

Goal 3: the students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of science.

Goal 4: the students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of social studies.

- §4.002, Texas Education Code

Public Education Career and Technology Education Goals

Each public school student shall master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for:

(1) managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner; and

(2) gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student's education at the postsecondary level.

- §29.181, Texas Education Code

OBJECTIVE 1

Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

Parent and Family Involvement in Student Learning

ISSUE

The United States Supreme Court has consistently affirmed the fundamental right of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. It is essential that schools welcome parents as full partners, including their meaningful participation in decisions that affect their children. The United States Congress affirmed that parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and the states, localities, and private institutions have the primary responsibility for supporting that parental role and that schools have a supporting role.

Parent and family involvement at home and school is essential to student achievement and success. Parents should guide their children to be responsible learners and promote positive attitudes and disposition toward learning and school. Discipline, respect, and self-control are requirements for learning and should be taught, encouraged, and reinforced by parents. Educators, parents and families, and policymakers must work to build programs that meet the needs of families and schools, enabling meaningful parent and family education and involvement in student learning. The success of parent and family involvement programs depends on planning that tailors programs to the needs of each community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Parents, families, and educators must work together to enable meaningful parent involvement at each campus and across all grade levels. Students cannot succeed without the active participation of parents and families both at home and school. Parent involvement has traditionally manifested itself as assistance with homework and participation in parent-teacher organizations. In a changing society, there are other crucial aspects of the relationship between schools and families: parent education, family literacy, and school readiness. Educators can involve parents in the meaningful decisions that affect their district and campus programs and facilitate open communication between the school and the home. Schools can also implement voluntary programs that provide many parents and families with the parenting skills they need to be active participants in all aspects of their children's growth and development. Family literacy programs can be a crucial factor in improving children's literacy and comprehension. Developmentally appropriate early childhood, preschool, and prekindergarten education programs that include adequate parent involvement and education components can help ensure that all students come to school ready to learn.

Schools must comply with Texas Education Code, Chapter 26, Parental Rights And Responsibilities, as follows:

- Welcome parents as partners with educators, administrators, and school district boards of trustees in the education of their children. Encourage parents and provide opportunities for them to actively participate in creating and implementing educational programs for their children.
- Not limit parental rights.
- Provide reasonable access to the school principal, or to a designated administrator with the authority to reassign a student, to request a change in the class or teacher to which the parent's child has been assigned, if the reassignment or change would not affect the assignment or reassignment of another student;

- Grant reasonable requests, such as the addition of a specific academic class in the course of study of the parent's child in keeping with the required curriculum if sufficient interest is shown in the addition of the class to make it economically practical to offer the class; permit a student to attend a class for credit above the child's grade level, whether in the child's school or another school, unless the board or its designated representative expects that the child cannot perform satisfactorily in the class; or be permitted to graduate from high school earlier than the child would normally graduate, if the child completes each course required for graduation; and allow a child who graduates early to participate in graduation ceremonies at the time the child graduates.
- Provide parents access to all written records of a school district concerning the parent's child, including: attendance records; test scores; grades; disciplinary records; counseling records; psychological records; applications for admission; health and immunization information; teacher and counselor evaluations; and reports of behavioral patterns.
- Provide access to a copy of each state assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023.
- Provide access to all teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids used in the classroom of the parent's child for parents to review.
- Provide full information regarding the school activities of a parent's child except as provided by Section 38.004.
- Prohibit any school district employee from encouraging or coercing a child to withhold information from the child's parent and discipline those who do.
- Obtain written parental consent to conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment, unless the examination, test, or treatment is required under Section 38.004 or state or federal law regarding requirements for special education; or to make or authorize the making of a videotape of a child or record or authorize the recording of a child's voice.
- Allow parents to remove their children temporarily from a class or other school activity that conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs if the parent presents or delivers to the teacher of the parent's child a written statement authorizing the removal of the child from the class or other school activity.
- Provide parents full information regarding the district's grievance procedure.

The State Board of Education has advocated high levels of parent and family involvement in education, based on school and community needs and goals. The board's policies have stressed the relationship between student achievement, parent involvement at all grade levels, and developmentally appropriate programs that prepare students for academic success. To achieve the objectives of its previous long-range plans, the board has called for improved adult and community education programs and has targeted state funds toward assisting schools in deregulating and restructuring their programs in order to increase parent and community involvement. In addition, the board has adopted an ambitious policy statement designed to improve adult literacy and to consequently enhance the capacity of parents and families to support their children's education. The initiatives presented in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Coordinate state, regional, and local initiatives that provide children and families with developmentally appropriate early childhood programs serving children ages 0-8.
2. Seek increased funding to:
   (a) make full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs available to all children, and
   (b) ensure that the state-funded prekindergarten programs serve all eligible children and families.
3. Assist education service centers, school districts, and campuses in identifying strategies and programs designed to enhance parent and family involvement in education. Communicate these strategies and programs to educators. Encourage school districts to incorporate indicators of quality parent involvement into their local accountability systems for campuses.
4. Encourage voluntary parenting education programs. Foster development of parenting skills as part of family literacy programs and work force development programs.
5. Promote the establishment of adult and family literacy programs consistent with the board's policies regarding adult education and literacy. Encourage collaborative planning and coordinated funding between family literacy programs and programs serving educationally disadvantaged students.
6. Encourage collaborative planning and weighted funding for adult literacy programs which deal with literacy levels of 0 to Grade 5.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. All Texas children will come to school ready to learn.
2. The number of eligible children who are served by state-funded prekindergarten programs will increase.
3. All parents and families will be responsible for providing their children with the support and encouragement needed for them to achieve their full educational potential.
4. All Texas schools will comply with Texas Education Code, Chapter 26, Parental Rights And Responsibilities.
5. All districts will provide teacher in-service training on TEC, Chapter 26, Parental Rights And Responsibilities, to assure parents are treated as full partners in the education of their children.
6. Schools will provide parents the option of half-day or full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.
7. The adult literacy rate in Texas will increase by 10%.

Community Involvement in Student Learning

ISSUE

Raising standards of academic excellence for all students while closing the achievement gap between student groups requires educators to work closely with parents, businesses, and community members. Parents, educators, businesses, and community members all have an important stake in the public education system's ability to prepare students with the skills and knowledge necessary in the world today. Collaboration can help ensure a meaningful education program for all students and facilitate better communication and planning based on community needs and goals.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The State Board of Education envisions public schools as centers of learning in each community, where parents and families, educators, service providers, and employers work together to ensure the educational and personal success of students. Businesses have an important stake in the public education system's ability to prepare students with the skills and knowledge required to meet real-world needs. Educators have a stake in keeping constantly informed of needed skills and infusing them into the curriculum. But schools cannot do the job alone. The board recognizes that community involvement is a critical component of academic excellence and quality learning for all students. Collaboration between educators, businesses, volunteer groups, and service agencies can help ensure a meaningful educational program for all students and facilitate better communication and planning based on community needs and goals.

The board works closely with other state agencies to promote work force development. Policies adopted by the board call for increased collaboration among various business and community entities to provide students with enhanced educational experiences and support. The board's previous long-range plans have established a framework for action that emphasizes improving business and community involvement in education and assisting school districts in identifying school safety needs. The initiatives presented in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Institute policies that encourage collaboration and planning among various state and local agencies and private groups that serve the needs of students and families. Ensure that collaboration is designed through a community decision making process and tailored to meet community needs.

2. Enable school districts to establish partnerships with businesses and other community interests to ensure that all students make a smooth transition from school to work or other post-secondary options. Use these partnerships to inform educators and students of the job market, priority occupations, and needed workplace skills.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. Texas school districts will have the opportunity to apply for grants to provide collaborative community education programs which meet the needs of local communities. All Texas school districts will have the opportunity to develop programs with business, local government, and community members that will substantially increase connections between education, work, and community service.

OBJECTIVE 2

Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

STUDENT LEARNING

ISSUE

All students need to learn and achieve at their highest levels in order to participate fully and successfully in the rapidly changing society and economy of the 21st century. All students must have a strong foundation of basic knowledge and skills to achieve high levels of intellectual, personal, social, technological, and career knowledge. Texas students and their families must assume responsibility for learning. The state's public education system must meet the twin challenges of raising the standard of excellence for all students and closing the achievement gap between student groups.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The most fundamental responsibility of schools is teaching students to read. The State Board of Education recognizes reading as the skill that is the foundation of each student's achievement of excellence in learning. Student learning is the academic knowledge and skills, as well as social and personal skills, that pupils acquire through their experiences in school. Student achievement and institutional progress in raising learning levels depend on the adequacy and quality of curriculum, teaching, school management, finance, and family and community involvement in education. The board links individual intellectual growth, content-area knowledge, career and technological competence, and knowledge of community, culture, and society to the issues of excellence and equity. The State Board of Education challenges parents and families, educators, policymakers, and community members to increase the overall quality of educational achievement by making student learning and achievement primary community values while working to close the achievement gap between student groups. This challenge – improving overall levels of student learning while increasing student performance one student at a time – has been the focus of two decades of education reform in Texas. Success in meeting this challenge will be illustrated by the achievement of each student in the public education system of Texas. That achievement will determine the ability of our state to respond to the demands of the new century.

The State Board of Education has adopted a plan for comprehensive, rigorous state assessments to measure student learning. The board continues to emphasize that when schools focus on teaching the essential knowledge and skills, student learning and achievement will continuously improve, and students will be prepared to succeed on state assessments, such as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE), and State Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA). State assessments should be used as an indication of adequate acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills. The board's previous long-range plans have focused on increasing expectations for academic performance for all students, closing the achievement gap between educationally disadvantaged and other students, decreasing the dropout rate, implementing a system of academic excellence indicators, and increasing support for early childhood and elementary education. The initiatives and results presented in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Establish high standards for student performance. Communicate these standards to educators, students, parents and families, policymakers, and the public. Draw upon State Board of Education policies to plan and develop programs that ensure meaningful progress toward state standards of academic excellence.

2. Encourage secondary school counselors to make students who are planning to pursue a post-secondary level education aware of the recommended or distinguished 24-credit high school diploma.

3. Increase coordination between prekindergarten through grade 12 education and post-secondary education and careers by encouraging educators and employers to plan and set goals collaboratively. Work at all levels of education to link standards of student performance to real-world requirements.

4. Raise the achievement of all students. Identify, plan, and implement programs proven effective for student populations with special needs, particularly in the early grades. Enhance the ability of school districts and campuses to develop programs and allocate resources for educationally disadvantaged students.

5. Promote student success by enabling school districts to extend and accelerate learning for students who have been retained or who are in danger of being retained.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. All Texas students meeting high school graduation requirements will pass the exit-level tests in the state student assessment program by the end of their senior year of high school.

2. Performance on the state student assessment program will increase toward the state standard of 90 percent passing all tests taken.

3. The achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing student groups will continue to decrease to the point that such a gap will become nonexistent.

4. Every student will be fully proficient in reading by the end of the third grade and will continue to remain proficient throughout their schooling.

5. Every student will show continuous progress in reading; reach proficiency in writing by the end of the fourth grade; and reach proficiency in mathematics, science, and social studies by the end of the eighth grade.

6. School personnel, community interested persons, and families will collaborate to ensure that all students will assume personal responsibility for learning.

Flexibility and Accountability

ISSUE

High levels of academic excellence for all students depend upon the ability of educators and policymakers to balance state leadership and local initiatives for improvement. The effectiveness of this balanced approach to education management and decision-making will be evaluated by an accountability system that recognizes district and campus progress in meeting clearly communicated state student performance goals and objectives.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Student academic achievement is the ultimate yardstick used to measure the quality and effectiveness of state, regional, district, and campus education management and organization. Numerous individuals contribute to the effectiveness of the system. State policymakers can develop and communicate policies for effective instruction and standards of student achievement. State and regional educators can provide guidance and technical assistance to teachers and administrators working to implement the policies and achieve these standards. Based on policies developed by local school boards, district and campus administrators, educators, and community members can plan, develop, and implement curriculum, instructional practices, staffing patterns, and budgets that address the standards and enhance the ability of teachers to improve student learning. The State Board of Education links state policy and support, local decision-making and improvement, and state, district, and campus accountability. The board believes student learning and teacher effectiveness will be enhanced through coordinated state, regional, and local planning based on the state long-range plan and ongoing analyses of student learning needs.

Texas has moved from an education system that prescribes procedures to one that emphasizes local flexibility, student achievement, and accountability. Local flexibility has been increased through the creation of home-rule school district charters, campus or campus program charters, and open enrollment charter schools. It is through the board's role of approving, denying, renewing, or revoking charters that the board can ensure quality education while encouraging more flexible approaches to meeting the needs of students. Organization and management for accountability depend upon indicators of student and institutional performance, information on how to improve and sustain that performance, recognition of district and campus progress toward state standards, and accreditation based on institutional performance.

Board policies support local flexibility and decision making and urge educators, administrators, and policymakers to use excellence and equity in student achievement as the basis for the design, implementation, and evaluation of school organization and instructional practices. The board's previous long-range plans have established a framework for action that emphasizes the development of a performance-based system of accountability and accreditation; analysis and coordination of state, regional, and local roles and responsibilities; creation of a state-wide public education information database; and efficient use of resources to ensure students in all districts have access to quality education programs. The initiatives in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Expand the use of State Board of Education long-range goals, objectives, initiatives, and intended results in state, regional, and local education improvement plans. Effectively communicate these goals, objectives, initiatives, and results to educators, policymakers, and community members.

2. To enhance the responsibility that local trustees and administrators share for student learning, improve state, regional, and district coordination, training, and support related to the state integrated accountability and results-based monitoring systems. Expand trustee and administrator training in the systems.

3. Enhance state, regional, and district training and support for site-based decision making. Articulate the roles and relationships of the Texas Education Agency, education service centers, school districts, and campuses in developing and coordinating improvement plans. Strengthen the link between improved student achievement and professional development in district and campus plans. Conduct research on site-based decision making and evaluate the effectiveness of models for district and campus plans for improvement.

4. Encourage flexibility for districts and campuses as they develop programs that promote standards of excellence across the full range of student achievement and meet locally identified needs and goals. Support and expand grassroots networks and initiatives that promote professional development, deregulation, and restructuring.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the state's systems of accountability, results-based monitoring, and accreditation in meeting the state's educational standards, goals, and objectives. To promote accurate measurement, ensure that these systems are consistent over time. Communicate evaluation results to state and local educators and policymakers.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. The number of Texas public school districts rated "exemplary" or "recognized" will continue to increase.

2. The number of Texas public school campuses rated "exemplary" or "recognized" will continue to increase.

3. All Texas public school campuses will be supported with comprehensive and coherent training in site-based decision making.

School Finance

ISSUE

Sufficient and efficient resources have an integral relationship to high levels of student achievement. Texas policymakers, educators, and community members must continue to work toward a public education funding system that is adequate, equitable, and efficient. Coordination of federal, state, and local funding sources for the benefit of Texas public education will be a key element of this system.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The State Board of Education calls on state and local educators, policymakers, and community members to continue their commitment to achieving equitable levels of funding and facilities for all students in the state. The coordination of federal, state, and local sources of funds takes on added importance as state and local educators grapple with limited fiscal resources and increasing enrollments and demand for education services. As Texas approaches the year 2006, the board will continue to manage the Permanent School Fund prudently, with emphasis upon reasonable and adequate income consistent with protection of the fund's capital assets, in order to benefit public education. The board will also continue to provide leadership for funding instruction, particularly programs that close the achievement gap between student groups, collaborative professional training and development, school facilities improvement, and education technology systems.

The policies and plans adopted by the State Board of Education emphasize the need for funding each level of education equitably and for ensuring that funds are budgeted to maximize instruction and student learning. State-level budgeting and strategic planning efforts reinforce the board's focus by linking biennial budgets to institutional performance and results. The board's previous long-range plans have supported funding and facilities equity and the adoption of an efficient and coordinated education funding system. The initiatives described in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Commit to additional funding for Texas public education to continue progress toward a more adequate, equitable, and efficient system, including funding for school facilities.
2. Ensure adequacy of funding for programs that close the achievement gap between student groups.
3. Further enhance coordination of funding from federal, state, and local sources. Analyze the impact of federal regulations which emanate from federal funds.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. Funding for Texas public education will be adequate, equitable, and efficient.
2. Facilities will be funded adequately in all districts in the state.
3. Continued prudent management of the Permanent School Fund will ensure its optimum use and benefit for current and future generations of Texas public school students.
4. The state share of public education funding will increase.

OBJECTIVE 3

Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a high school diploma.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

Dropout Reduction

ISSUE

Completion of high school is a minimum prerequisite to success in today's competitive society. While Texas educators, students, and families have made progress over the past decade in reducing the number of dropouts, we must lower the dropout rate for economically disadvantaged and minority students and build on successful dropout reduction efforts to ensure that all students remain in school until they obtain a high school diploma.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Research indicates that while success in the early grades does not guarantee success in high school, failure in elementary school strongly predicts failure in the later years. Educators must be trained in strategies and techniques that identify students at risk of school failure, provide effective intervention, and enable all students to become fully proficient in reading and other core content areas early in the elementary grades. Educators must also be able to successfully identify and intervene with older students who are at risk of not getting their high school diploma.

The Texas Education Code directs the state to achieve a longitudinal dropout rate of 5% by the 1997-98 school year. The longitudinal dropout rate measures the percentage of students of each entering seventh grade class who drop out over the six years until graduation. The actual longitudinal dropout rate for grades 7-12 for the graduating class of 1999 was 9.0%. Some racial and ethnic groups continue to experience significantly higher longitudinal dropout rates, i.e., Hispanics dropped out at the rate of 14.3%, African Americans at 11.7%, and Whites at 5.1%. In contrast, the annual dropout rate measures the percent of all students in grades 7 - 12 who dropped out in a school year. The 1998-99 annual rate was 1.6%. African American students had a 2.3% annual dropout rate in 1998-99, and Hispanics had a 2.3% annual dropout rate that year. Some ethnic and racial groups also demonstrate higher attrition rates. The 1998-99 attrition rates for grades 9-12 were 37% for all students, 44% for African American students, and 48% for Hispanic students.

Dropout reduction is a crucial element of school district, campus, and State Board of Education planning. School district and campus accountability ratings depend in part upon their success in planning and implementing programs that reduce the number of student dropouts. Board policies and planning efforts have focused on reducing the dropout rate through professional development, the establishment of challenging academic environments for all students, extending time for learning, and enhancing community involvement in education. The Texas Education Code establishes criteria designed to identify students at risk of dropping out. Only 37.9% of the 1998-99 dropouts, however, were identified under state criteria as being at risk of dropping out. This finding suggests the need to reexamine methods used to identify students as being at risk.

In addition to state and local policies and programs, parents and families have a crucial responsibility for preventing student dropouts and supporting academic success. State, regional, and local educators can develop policies and initiatives that enhance the crucial role parents play in education by increasing opportunities for involvement. The initiatives presented in this long-range plan build upon these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Coordinate state, district, and community efforts to reduce the dropout rate. Link academic, guidance, and career education programs in this effort.
2. Assist students identified as at risk of dropping out of school with getting a high school diploma through appropriate state-required compensatory or accelerated instructional services.
3. Review, evaluate, and improve the criteria and procedures used to identify students as being at risk of dropping out.
4. Support professional development opportunities for teachers and other educators in early identification, intervention, and effective instructional techniques for students at risk of dropping out of school.
5. Increase opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's education.
6. Monitor use of compensatory funds to determine the percentage used for programs to address the needs of students at risk of dropping out.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. All Texas students will remain in school until they complete a high school diploma.

OBJECTIVE 4

A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

CURRICULUM

ISSUE

High expectations, a challenging curriculum, effective instructional programs, and early mastery of core academic skills are all crucial to the educational success of Texas students. The State Board of Education recognizes that reading is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. Research shows that a child who doesn't learn the reading basics early is unlikely to learn them at all. Any child who doesn't learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge and is unlikely to ever flourish in school or in life. In addition, excellent student performance depends upon the ability of each student to write, listen, and speak effectively. Curriculum and classroom instruction must incorporate real-world expectations, use of technology, and clearly stated standards of academic content and student performance.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The rigor and quality of a curriculum are judged by its ability to meet the performance requirements of a rapidly changing world. The quality and effectiveness of instructional programs are judged by their capacity to create the conditions that enable all students to achieve these performance requirements. This demands an appropriate level of difficulty and rigorous content to challenge all students. To meet the challenge of raising the level of student learning while simultaneously closing the achievement gap between student groups, the State Board of Education envisions curriculum and instructional programs that are academically rigorous, developmentally appropriate, standards-based, and directed at meeting real-world needs. Academically rigorous programs challenge every student to perform at his or her highest level. They build upon each student's early mastery of core academic skills. Developmentally appropriate programs focus on children's intellectual and personal growth and character development. They foster individual understanding, recognize the social nature of learning, and value cultural and linguistic diversity. Content and student performance standards link academic skills and knowledge to grade-level performance. They are clear and challenging statements of what every student should know and be able to do. Real-world requirements are infused throughout the curriculum through the integration of academic and career education and the coordination of secondary, post-secondary, and workplace education programs.

A primary purpose of the public school curriculum is to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism and can function productively in a free enterprise society with appreciation for the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage. The mission of public schools is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of this state and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of citizens. The State Board of Education is charged with developing the essential knowledge and skills of the curriculum. Curriculum goals and standards set for schools should be clear, objective, and measurable. Academically rigorous standards should be aligned with comprehensive, consistent assessments and the textbook adoption process.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the prerequisites to academic excellence. These prerequisites, along with academic excellence in mathematics, science, and historical and cultural literacy, enable full participation in society. Research shows below grade-level performance in reading to be the primary cause of early grade retention and ultimately, for many students, dropping out of school. The State Board of

Education believes that early reading proficiency provides the foundation for each student's mastery of core academic skills. Effective research-based programs provide:*

- Direct teaching of decoding, comprehension, and literature appreciation;
- Phoneme awareness instruction;
- Systemic and explicit instruction in the code system of written English;
- Daily exposure to a variety of texts, as well as incentives for children to read independently and with others;
- Vocabulary instruction that includes a variety of complementary methods designed to explore the relationships among words and the relationships among word structure, origin, and meaning;
- Comprehension strategies that include prediction of outcomes, summarizing, clarification, questioning, and visualization; and
- Frequent writing of prose to enable deeper understanding of what is read.

These programs effectively enhance the ability of all students to listen, speak, read, spell, and write clearly.

The board supports the goal of the Texas Reading Initiative that all students are reading on grade level or higher by third grade and throughout their schooling. Attaining this goal requires a multi-pronged effort aimed at providing information, resources, and knowledge to educators as they undertake the task of teaching children to read. This effort has included establishing Reading Academies to instruct kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers in research-based practices for effective teaching of reading in early grades and providing assistance to districts with selecting Early Reading Instruments to identify students who are falling behind in reading. In addition, Accelerated Reading Instruction programs have been developed and implemented across the state to assist children needing more intensive, more targeted, and more supportive reading instruction.

The State Board of Education provides continuing support for innovative and effective educational programs for all students. The board has adopted recommended and distinguished achievement high school programs that increase graduation requirements, phase out below grade-level courses, and enhance individual planning for education and career goals. Board policies concentrate on the objectives of academic excellence, challenging content, and access for all students to rigorous and effective educational programs. The board's previous long-range plans have established a framework for action that seeks to strengthen the state's essential knowledge and skills, develop students' citizenship and social skills, enhance career awareness and education, and provide all students with challenging programs. The initiatives and results presented in this long-range plan build on these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Develop instructional programs that ensure all students achieve early mastery of reading and other core academic skills. Use assessments and other data collection to identify students who are at risk for dyslexia or who are experiencing difficulties in their reading development. Offer opportunities for students experiencing reading difficulties to engage in more intensive, more targeted, and more supportive reading instruction.

* from *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science* by the American Federation of Teachers

2. Ensure that the curriculum standards are academically rigorous and developmentally appropriate, enhance character development, and are responsive to real-world needs over time. Communicate the standards to educators, policymakers, and the public.

3. Ensure that future board review and revision of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills includes consideration of increasing emphasis on subjects including, but not limited to, Early American and U.S. History.

4. Continue to plan, develop, and disseminate curriculum frameworks derived from the standards-based essential knowledge and skills. Support the dissemination of these frameworks with coordinated opportunities for professional development. Provide leadership to districts and campuses implementing the frameworks.

5. Ensure that the standards-based essential knowledge and skills, textbook adoption, and the state student assessment program remains coordinated and aligned over time.

6. Enhance coordination of student performance standards and post-secondary expectations through greater integration of content-area skills, knowledge, career awareness, and planning.

7. Coordinate leadership initiatives and technical assistance activities to ensure that all students have access to instructional programs that are academically challenging, developmentally appropriate, based on rigorous content and student performance standards, and foster character growth and development at all grade levels.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. A developmentally appropriate prekindergarten through grade 12 curriculum, based on rigorous content and student performance standards, will be in place in all Texas schools.

2. A developmentally appropriate assessment system, based on rigorous content and student performance standards, will be in place in all Texas schools.

3. A developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports all students attaining full proficiency in reading by the end of third grade will be in place in all Texas schools.

OBJECTIVE 5

Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

PERSONNEL

ISSUE

Quality educators are essential to quality student learning. Texas public education must attract and retain effective teachers, support staff, and administrators who have the content knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary for all students to learn and perform at the levels required in 21st century society.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

High levels of student learning cannot occur without well-prepared educators. The State Board of Education recognizes the importance of professional development for teachers faced with effectively presenting increasingly complex content knowledge to an increasingly diverse student population. The success of teachers in performing this task not only affects student achievement, it also impacts district and campus performance in the state accountability system. Four principles guide the system of educator training and development: focus on content knowledge – ensuring that teachers are prepared to teach to rigorous standards of content and academic performance; collaboration – with higher education, alternative certification programs, education service centers, and school districts working together to train effective educators; a focus on results – articulated through student-centered proficiencies that describe what educators must know to assure high levels of learning for all students; and renewal – with ongoing professional development increasing and becoming a vital component of campus planning and practice.

The State Board of Education advocates for an educator work force that is highly qualified, well compensated, and able to meet individual student as well as classroom needs. The board's previous long-range plans established a framework for action that focuses on professional standards and competencies, competitive levels of compensation, increased time for planning and professional development, recruitment of minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas, and enhanced training in a range of instructional methods.

The Texas Education Code provides several options to ensure that classrooms across Texas are staffed by qualified teachers. The State Board of Education, in coordination with the State Board for Educator Certification, encourages districts to take full advantage of these options to increase the percentage of classroom teachers who are either certified in or pursuing certification for the content areas and/or grade levels in which they teach. The options include university certification programs, post-baccalaureate certification programs, alternative certification programs, and centers for professional development. The Texas Education Code also enables districts to grant district teaching permits to exceptionally qualified individuals. The initiatives and results presented in this long-range plan build on these themes to address the issues of enhancing both the supply and quality of Texas educators.

INITIATIVES

1. To enhance the responsibility that teachers share for student learning, support professional preparation and ongoing development programs through collaborative planning among teacher training institutions and programs, education service centers, school districts, and community institutions. Improve planning between post-secondary academic departments and teacher training institutions. Increase the institutional funding for university students enrolled in teacher training programs. Ensure continued funding and support for collaborative partnerships among school districts, teacher training institutions and programs, and education service centers.

2. Focus teacher training and ongoing professional development on rigorous content and student performance standards. Communicate these standards to prekindergarten through grade 12 educators and faculty in teacher training institutions and programs.

3. Provide teachers training to teach reading through structured, systematic, and multisensory approaches to phonemic and alphabetic awareness within language- and literature-rich learning environments. Support strong standards and guidelines for the Master Reading Teacher Certificate.

4. Work collaboratively to ensure that teacher preparation programs address the renewed emphasis on the foundation curriculum as reflected by the four academic goals of Texas public education. Recommend legislation to increase flexibility within degree plans so that prospective teachers receive training in the content area knowledge and pedagogical skills needed to ensure that all students achieve early mastery of the foundation curriculum.

5. Support a comprehensive program to identify and address the supply of and demand for teachers in specific content areas and geographic regions and to encourage a broader range of the state's population to enter the teaching profession.

6. Support the planning, development, and implementation of the set of indicators used to assess the ability of teacher preparation institutions and programs to provide teachers with the knowledge and proficiencies they need to ensure high student academic performance.

7. Increase the number of paid professional development days. Ensure that professional development supported by these additional contract days addresses campus and student learning needs and becomes a critical component of district and campus improvement plans.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. Texas public education will attract and retain a highly qualified and effective educator work force that reflects the state's diverse population.

2. All teachers will be trained in the content and student performance standards in the essential knowledge and skills.

3. Texas teacher salaries will be above the national average for teacher salaries, but with an absolute state minimum beginning teacher salary of $30,000 per year, and a statewide average salary for all teachers of $45,000 per year.

4. Texas teacher contracts will be extended to encompass 180 regular instruction days, 20 days availability for paid instruction of at risk students, and 60 days availability for paid professional development, in-session training, lesson planning, vacation and holidays.

5. Statewide, at least 98% of Texas teachers will be certified in all areas in which they teach.

OBJECTIVE 6

The state's students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

ISSUE

The high levels of learning to be achieved by all Texas students must be demonstrated through exemplary performance based on challenging state standards. The state standards of individual and institutional performance must meet or exceed national and international standards of excellence.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The performance of Texas students can be measured through a number of state and national assessments. The number of Texas students taking these tests, their scores, and the use of these assessments in rating district and campus performance, have increased since the State Board of Education developed its first Long-Range Plan in 1986. Results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examination as well as college entrance and advanced placement examinations are key indicators of student performance. There are some gaps between the performance of Texas students and students across the nation on these measures. Although these differences have decreased somewhat since 1987, Texas student performance needs to improve relative to national standards on most measures.

To increase student academic preparation, board policies and previous long-range plans have emphasized the importance of access to high quality educational opportunities. The State Board of Education has phased out state credit for below grade-level high school courses and has worked with educators and community groups to develop and adopt recommended and distinguished achievement high school programs. The initiatives presented in this plan build upon these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Increase student participation in the recommended and distinguished achievement high school programs. Encourage educators and community members to develop education programs that prepare a greater number of students for completion of these rigorous course sequences. Communicate the importance of these programs to students and families.

2. Increase student participation in, and scores on, advanced placement and college entrance examinations. Increase student access to these examinations by negotiating with testing companies to restructure, reduce, or eliminate fees.

3. Align secondary schools academic preparation, such as the requirements under the distinguished and recommended academic programs, so that students are better prepared for college as indicated by scores on pre-college examinations (PSAT, EXPLORE, PLAN) and college admission examinations (SAT and ACT).

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. The performance of Texas students will consistently exceed national performance as measured on NAEP.

2. The percentage of students completing the Recommended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement Program will increase.
3. Results on the SAT and ACT will continue to improve beyond the national average.
4. The number of Texas public school students who qualify for credit and/or advanced standing in college through advanced placement examinations will increase.
5. The growth rate in the number of SAT, ACT, and AP examinees will continue to outpace the growth in the number of examinees for the nation.

OBJECTIVE 7

School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

Safe Schools

ISSUE

Texas students need safe, disciplined schools and classrooms in order to reach their full educational potential. The call for safe schools is echoed by legislative leaders, educators, students, and parents. Effective safe school initiatives must facilitate and build upon meaningful school-family-community partnerships and common standards of right and wrong.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Safe and disciplined schools are essential to student learning. The State Board of Education, educators, and policymakers recognize the critical importance of safe schools to student achievement, teacher performance, and community vitality. In strengthening Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 37: Discipline, Law and Order, the state's legislators have directed every school district to provide a disciplinary alternative education program to serve the educational and rehabilitation needs of students who are removed from the regular classroom due to disciplinary reasons.

Under the provisions of Chapter 37 districts are required to include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention in campus improvement plans. Teachers are authorized by Chapter 37 to remove from the classroom any student whose behavior is unruly, disruptive, or abusive. Each school district is required to outline the standards and procedures for discipline management in a student code of conduct. In addition, Senate Bill 1724 requires collecting and reporting school safety information.

The board challenges students, parents and families, educators, and community leaders to participate actively in making their schools safe learning environments. Ensuring safety for Texas public education will take nothing short of a coordinated effort by the state and each community to keep violence, drugs, and disruptive behavior out of schools. The board's policies and previous planning efforts recognize that school safety is a shared responsibility. The initiatives presented in this plan build upon these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Encourage community-wide initiatives which address the prevention of discipline problems, drug abuse, and violence in schools.
2. Fund and implement quality disciplinary alternative education programs for serious offenders.
3. Support uniform state-level collecting and reporting of school safety information. Promote coordination among public schools, law enforcement authorities, and juvenile probation agencies, and communities.
4. Provide professional development in discipline management and school safety policies.
5. Encourage the use of appropriate computer software to ensure each student in alternative settings will be provided instruction aligned with the education curriculum of the student's previous educational setting.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. All Texas schools will be safe environments for learning and instruction.
2. The rate of criminal activities on school campuses will decrease.
3. The number of weapons arrests among school-age children will decrease.
4. The percentage of students using illicit drugs will decrease.
5. Teachers and administrators will enforce fair and objective disciplinary measures under TEC Chapter 37 to ensure student safety.

OBJECTIVE 8

Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

Research and Innovation

ISSUE

State and local educators can improve student achievement, instruction, and administration by identifying critical issues for research, conducting research on those issues, communicating research results, and planning and implementing research-based programs that effectively meet district and campus needs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Research, planning, and the implementation of innovative and effective programs are crucial tools for improving student achievement and educator effectiveness. The Texas Education Code identifies research and the dissemination of research results as key state-level functions. The State Board of Education develops its rules, plans, and policies based on research and analysis that addresses educational excellence and administrative efficiency. State-level evaluations and reports on programs and policies guide long-term implementation and identify areas for further research and review.

District and campus improvement efforts grow out of local initiative, planning, and innovation guided by sound educational research. In pursuit of academic excellence, many districts conduct pilot studies and evaluate local programs and practices. District- and campus-based research and evaluation can provide frameworks that link student needs and district and campus objectives to the state's system of academic excellence indicators. Research also informs professional development that will lead to enhanced student learning.

As valuable as research and planning can be in improving education, teachers and district and campus administrators seldom find the time to engage in it. The State Board of Education encourages educators to conduct research on teaching and learning, to identify best practices through research based on district and campus conditions, and to analyze and seek waivers from federal and state laws and rules that may hinder student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Educators who conduct and share research enhance their own professionalism and contribute to the knowledge base on teaching and learning. Collaborative research among public schools, institutions of higher education, and businesses increases educator effectiveness, enhances professional knowledge, and addresses local needs. Previous board policies and long-range plans have emphasized the importance of conducting educational research, communicating research results, and encouraging collaboration for educational excellence and efficiency. The initiatives presented in this plan build upon these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Improve access to and expand the use of public education information. Conduct research on the most effective uses of the data. Evaluate the effectiveness of methods used by the state to collect education information and the purposes for which the information is used. Communicate research and evaluation results to state and local educators and policymakers.

2. Enhance the capacity of teachers to incorporate up-to-date educational technology into instructional strategies that ensure high levels of student achievement. Communicate effective instructional uses of educational technology to educators and teacher training institutions and programs. Improve access for educators to all available educational research.

3. Conduct research on the effectiveness of state, district, and campus plans and programs for student learning and communicate research results to state and local educators and policymakers. Encourage educators to conduct research on teaching and learning.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. The annual statewide survey of decision making and planning structures will report improvements in the use of site-based decision making and improvement planning.
2. The number of research presentations at state, regional, and local conferences made by local educators will increase.
3. Use of the agency's web site will continue to increase.

OBJECTIVE 9

Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

- §4.001, Texas Education Code

TECHNOLOGY

ISSUE

Technology provides educators and students with tools to improve teaching and learning. Texas is a national leader in bringing technology into the classroom. We must continue to increase both access to and integration of technology in the classroom and provide educators with the training necessary to ensure that all students can benefit from the use of these instructional tools.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Texas is recognized as a national leader in its efforts to increase student access to technology and enhance learning, instruction, and educational management through the use of technological tools and data. For more than a decade, state, regional, and local educators and policymakers have been engaged in an effort to plan, implement, and use computers and other educational technology for improving education and student performance. These efforts have focused on providing the technological tools that enable students to find, analyze, interpret, integrate, and share information and enable teachers to improve curriculum and expand instruction. They have also addressed the need to improve student and teacher access to technology through the use of state technology funding allotments, statewide student-to-computer ratios, and expansion of educational telecommunications and distance learning.

The State Board of Education is charged with developing a state technology plan for acquiring and using technology in public schools, fostering professional development related to the use of technology, enhancing computer literacy and skills among all of the state's public education students, and strengthening communication and the use of information related to educational technology in every region of the state. During the years covered by the board's previous long-range and technology plans, state, regional, and local educators have focused on building infrastructure, emphasizing the need to bring computers and related telecommunications equipment into schools and classrooms. The state-funded per-student technology allotment has symbolized the statewide commitment to this effort.

State and local educators and policymakers now face the challenge of fully integrating the use of educational technology in curriculum and instruction. The board has approved initiatives to improve educator training and professional development in using technology and to strengthen the role of technology to ensure that all students are provided challenging content and can reach rigorous standards of performance. The board's policies and previous planning efforts have increased access to technology in order to strengthen educational capacity and have identified the importance of enhancing the meaningful use of technology in curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The initiatives described in this long-range plan build upon these themes.

INITIATIVES

1. Provide students, teachers, and administrators with equal access to technology tools that enhance instruction and student achievement.
2. Promote the use of educational technology to enhance instruction and improve student achievement. Regularly review the processes that integrate technology into curriculum and instruction.

3. Support a system of technology training and professional development that is tied to the content and student performance standards developed through the clarification of the essential knowledge and skills.
4. Communicate information about emerging technologies to educators, parents, and students.
5. Demonstrate the board's continued commitment to the long-range and technology plans by requesting a higher state-funded per-student technology allotment from the legislature.

INTENDED RESULTS

By the year 2006:

1. Texas will have made significant progress toward accomplishing the objectives established in the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 1996-2010.
2. All Texas high school graduates will have earned at least one technology application credit.
3. The percentage of school districts which meet or exceed the state standard for the student-computer ratio will continue to increase.
4. All school districts and campuses will have direct access to telecommunications and Internet resources.

GLOSSARY

Developmentally Appropriate Education

- Developmentally appropriate education focuses on how children learn and is geared to the stages of children's development.
- Developmentally appropriate education does not result in the lowering of expectations; it adheres to high standards of academic and personal performance.
- There are four dimensions of developmentally appropriate education:
  - It is age appropriate – focusing on the ways children grow and develop.
  - It is individually appropriate – fostering individual students' interests and understanding.
  - It is culturally and linguistically appropriate – valuing the rich variety of languages and learning experiences children bring with them to the classroom.
  - It supports the social nature of learning – providing abundant opportunities for teacher and student interaction.

Student Performance Standards

Student performance standards are explanations of the level of quality necessary for a student's demonstration of knowledge and skills. Performance standards answer the question, "How good is good enough?" They include performance descriptions that explain how well students should know what they have been learning and the ways they can demonstrate what they have acquired.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a nonsegregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED BY THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1972; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1964; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986; AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or disability constitutes a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

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